The Hampden Hippocrat

A Bulletin for the Hampden District of the Massachusetts Medical Society

VOLUME X SPRING, 1954 No. 2

THE BACK DOOR WORKS BEST

No one of sound mind would object to generous treatment of war veterans who have served their country, — or in fact, others in distress who cannot help themselves. The sentiment is as strong as it is noble. Astute political exploiters realize this truth better than the majority of unthinking citizens who nevertheless are asked to pay the bills. The firmly entrenched bureaucrats of the Veterans Administration have learned the lesson well. They are fully organized and rampant now in Washington.

With the approval of everyone, the U. S. Government established veterans' hospitals after World War I for treating service-connected disabilities. As these maladies were corrected, the beds that were emptied might have been removed as well, so Congress was persuaded to pass a minor amendment to the World War Veterans Act making every ailing veteran eligible for care whether or not his disability was acquired in service of his country. Thus the beds were refilled and the jobs were saved. By now the Veterans Administration program has expanded into world-record proportions. Our Federal government definitely is involved in the practice of medicine, regardless of the opposition.

So effectual was the veterans' organized opposition at the hearings in Washington that no member of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs would sponsor bills of the A. M. A. aimed at limiting expansion of the free V. A. hospitalization program. V. A. Administrator Harvey (Doc) Higley was on the war path. His wisecrack that 'upper income bracket doctors probably paid plenty of taxes **on the income they report'**, brought long and loud applause from an assembly of Legionnaires, though he admitted the remark hit "a little below the belt". Other Veterans are on record as deploring such means but welcoming the ends. Higley's main theme blamed the A. M. A. for criticizing extension of veterans' service while offering no substitute program. So there is the situation in a nutshell; where Oscar Erving could not break down the front door, the family entrance was left unguarded.

The Tennessee State Medical Association, however, through Ex-President H. H. Shoulders has come up with a plan for furnishing care for all veterans and at the same time preserving freedom of choice. The Tennessee plan calls for prepayment insurance financed by the Federal Government when the veteran is unable to pay. The choice of physician and hospital would remain with the individual just as it does today in workmen's compensation.

There remains the last resort of noncooperation by physicians, but that is incompatible with medical ethics. Obviously 60,000 doctors can be outvoted by legions of veterans, but many of the latter are taxpayers themselves. So the ultimate solution seems to rest squarely with the people who are asked to pay and pay. If you think the prepayment plan offers the best answer and at less cost, see that your Congressional Representatives are so informed without delay.

Hampden Hippocrat

"Life is short and art is long, the occasion fleeting, experience fallacious and judgment difficult." —Hippocrates, 430 B.C.

This Issue 500 Copies

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TOUCHE

Among the other slings and arrows by which the medical profession is currently assailed, none is more insidious, nor, by and large, untrue, than the fable that major surgery is invariably delayed until the patient has the cash on hand.

What brings this to mind is an appraisal of a weekly television show, "Strike It Rich", seen in this area on Wednesday evenings at 9:00 P. M. This is a give-away-type spectacle, complete with personable and sympathetic quizmaster, weeping audiences and various contestants, often physically deformed, and always with a tale of woe which only cash will resolve.

At first glance, there seems to be nothing objectionable in all this giving money and useful gifts to people who apparently desperately need them, although the mentality of many of the contestants is obviously of a type that will immediately plunge them into new financial difficulties as quickly as "Strike It Rich" has rescued them from their current ones. However, a large proportion of the contestants explain that they need money for operations and medical expenses, (the term hospital bill is almost never heard) and the lay viewer must inevitably be left with the impression that cold-hearted physicians are demanding their fees before anything will be done.

And to make matters worse, any medical man beyond the third year of medical school can classify these people on sight as the flower of the clinic, or staff type, on whom no surgeon yet has ever gotten wealthy.

In view of this situation, at a time of criticism of all aspects of American medicine today, it might be well for the American Medical Association to point out the commercial sponsors, or directly to the public, that free clinics exist virtually everywhere, and that no one now, or in the past, need be deprived of essential medical or surgical care because of inability to pay a physician.

J. A. B.

COME ONE COME ALL

Annual meeting of the Hampden District Medical Society,
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THE LIVING NEED CHARITY MORE THAN THE DEAD

Seven years ago the mayor of Springfield appointed two doctors from each of the city's three general hospitals to study the increasingly pressing problem of the care of chronically ill and infirm citizens who must go without such service. As life expectancy increases and the cost of living rises, of course more and more among us find themselves in this sad predicament. Many, too, could return to the self-supporting status if handicaps were overcome and proper placement could find jobs suited to their limitations. Following the doctor's report, the solution was put into concrete form as a new municipal department, the Springfield Municipal Hospital that eventually would also include the Isolation Hospital. The State charter of incorporation is dated June 3, 1948.

The actual concrete was not poured until a much later date, due to scarcity of materials and of funds that were predicated on the Hill-Burton Act promising Federal aid for hospital building at the rate of one for every two dollars that were raised locally. Eventually one for twenty-four was the rate of the grant received, and the city needed a Bond issue of $6,070,000.

Now at last Springfield is about to dedicate this new consolidated hospital of 708 beds, with its worthy medical staff who serve without pay, on May 20, 1954 in fact. The dream of rehabilitation verges on reality with adequate provisions for hydrotherapy, electrotherapy and psychotherapy in addition to ordinary medical procedures. Future plans call for access to the Trade School for training of convalescents in new techniques or renewing their old ones. It is feasible now to cooperate with the Rehabilitation Clinic to avoid overlapping; also to use the new Psychiatric Consultation Service.

We salute the City of Homes for pioneering so effectively for her elders and her handicapped. But especially let us commend the preservering dreamers who lived to see their dreams come true!

As for me, it is good to know where one can go when writer's cramp becomes disabling.

S. Q. Lapius

MANNERS

The Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company invited the Hampden District Medical Society to dinner on February 23rd. Notices went out ten days prior to that date to the 465 members of the district. Of these, 162 accepted, 86 declined, 8 returned postals without indication of the senders' intention, and one postal bore a signature so illegible that it stumped the secretary. Of the 162 members who accepted the invitation, 34 not only failed to attend the dinner but sent no word of their changed intention. Worst of all, 208 members deigned to make no reply to a generous invitation to dinner.

Editor's Note: No, that was not the worst, bad as it was; the meeting was a timely presentation of a topic that means much to the future of medical practice and was presented by a group of experts in various fields of insurance.

Vs UNDECIPHERABILITY

Chapter 137 of the Acts of 1954, which becomes effective May 24, 1954, adds the following sentence to the present law, "The cause, or causes, of death shall be printed or typed on all certificates required to be furnished under this section." Arthur J. Hassett, Director of Vital Statistics for Massachusetts.

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CARRY ME BACK'

In March of 1945 when the big push on the Japanese home islands was under way, I returned from sea duty, and suddenly was assigned to Sick Call duty at a large East Coast Seebee base, where several Construction Battalions were training and preparing to shove off for the Pacific. On my first morning, I was warned that one Batallion was to entrain two days later, and that no man from it who appeared at sick call was to be hospitalized unless I was morally certain he was dying.

This policy, it was explained, was to prevent any serious depletion of the Battalion personnel just before departure, since previously such mass depletions had occurred, due to the clever timing of the men in announcing their infirmities. As a precautionary measure, the authorities had ruled that any complaint announced within 48 hours of train-time, would be investigated on the West Coast.

I deftly disposed of two colds and an athlete's foot, and then the next man stepped up — a nice looking healthy young man. "What's your trouble sailor," I said, "Well, sir," he said, "I'm supposed to ship out tomorrow with my Battalion, but I've got an awful bad back, and I'd like to have something done about it."

Well, here we go, I thought. So I explained why it would have to be seen to on the West Coast.

He looked at me for a minute, and then he exploded. I might say that he exploded in a way that made me realize somehow that every word he said was true.

He said "Look - sir -, I fell into the hold of a cargo ship we were unloading in New Caledonia six months ago and hurt my back, just before the Batallion was coming home. So they said there, "Wait'll you get to Pearl Harbor". When I got to Pearl, they said "Wait'll you get back to the States." When I got to Frisco, they said "Wait'll you get back from leave." So I went home for 30 days leave, reported back here yesterday, got thrown into this Batallion, and you tell me "Wait till you get to the West Coast." I suppose when I get to the West Coast, they'll tell me to wait till I get to New Caledonia, and then I'll be right back where I started."

I believed him, I knew he had a right to be disgusted, but - he went to the West Coast!

And what can be learned from this sad tale? Well, have you ever heard of a better preview of socialized medicine?

J. A. B.

MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC

Stanley D. Rapinchuk, M. D., assumed the duties of Director of the Hampden District Mental Health Clinic on November 15, 1953. Dr. Rapinchuk is a graduate of Boston University School of Medicine. Training in psychiatry was accomplished at the Walter Reed Army Hospital. Following this he was chief of the Mental Hygiene Consultation Service at Fort Riley, Kansas and Chief of the Psychiatric Service, United States Army Hospital, Fort Riley. He was certified by the American Board of Neurology and Psychiatry in May of 1953.

The Hampden District Mental Health Clinic was temporarily housed at 184 Mill Street and moved into permanent quarters at 120 High Street. The purpose of the clinic is to provide psychiatric treatment to those unable to afford private care. Treatment will be limited to individuals suffering from the neuroses. A fee will be charged commensurate with the ability of the patient to pay. Referral of patients is through medical channels.

The staff of the clinic will consist of a psychiatrist, psychiatric social worker and clerical help. Temporary psychiological testing and facilities will be obtained on an individual basis though the addition of a clinical psychologist to the staff is contemplated for the future.

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DISTAFF DOINGS

The Auxiliary this season decided to make its one money-making project into a real social event to include the doctors and their friends. Mrs. Alfred M. Glickman, president, called a board meeting in her home in the early summer and plans were laid for a formal dinner dance to be held at the Roger Smith Hotel in Holyoke on Saturday, November seventh, to be called the "White Cap Ball" since the proceeds would be used entirely for the nurses's scholarship fund.

Mrs. Aldo J. Leani was named chairman with Mrs. Edward J. Halton of Holyoke her co-chairman. The private ball room in the hotel was beautifully decorated with flowers, miniature nurses caps and candles. There were many cocktail parties in private homes and the hotel opened a small cocktail room just off the ball room.

An excellent orchestra and a delicious roast beef dinner pleased the men and won many compliments for the committee. Everyone agreed that the affair was entirely successful in every way and financially it exceeded all expectations. About one hundred fifty couples attended at fifteen dollars per couple. Many checks were sent in by persons unable to attend. After all expenses were paid it was announced that about thirteen hundred dollars could be added to the scholarship fund. The board then decided to give eight one hundred twenty-five scholarships this year instead of the usual four. This made two scholarships available to each of the four training hospitals in the area and also two practical nursing scholarships of sixty dollars each to girls wishing to enroll in Springfield Trade School for this Course.

It was also decided to make additional aid available, if necessary, to girls who had been given scholarships in the past. This action greatly enlarged the whole nurses' recruitment program which includes teas in each of the training hospitals, namely the Holyoke and Providence Hospitals in Holyoke and the Mercy and Springfield hospitals in Springfield.

Hampden District now boasts two hundren sixty-nine paid members with more being added. They also sponsored a program of health education on the local radio stations. These programs are heard each Sunday from 12:30 to 12:45 P. M. and are prepared by the Bureau of Health Education and have won third place recognition for this work in the State.

NEW COUNSELING SERVICE

The Springfield Rehabilitation Center Counseling Service was activated January 4, 1954 when the first clients were received. This Service has been established by a joint planning committee representing medicine and religion: Dr. Jerome Whitney, Father O'Connor, Dr. Maxfield, and Rabbi Synder. The program has the approval and active cooperation of the authorities of the three faiths.

Each client will be examined by a consultant neuropsychiatrist to determine that the situation is non-medical and non-neuropsychiatric. The client will then be referred to a qualified counselor provided by one of the churches. All existing agencies providing related services will be called on to cooperate in this program. Clients will be seen by appointment as arranged through the office of the Springfield Rehabilitation Center. Telephone 9-5190.

Readers whether lay or medical who are curious enough to crave knowledge of Cybernetics should consult the best popular exposition of the subject in the book by Dr. Norbert Wiener on 'thinking machines'. We are not.

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EMERGENCY SERVICE

To The Editor:

It seems appropriate at this time to review, clarify and appraise the Emergency Medical Service program in the Hampden District.

By vote of the Society a voluntary program for Emergency Medical Service in the Hampden District was authorized in 1950, and put into effect in November 1950 under the chairmanship of Dr. Joseph M. Baker. This was the first such program in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a fact of which we should be justly proud. Some sixty-seven doctors in the Springfield area volunteered to participate. Gradually the program disintegrated because of the diminishing number of volunteer doctors. It was the conviction of the committee on Emergency Medical Service that the program should be continued. This is consonant with the trend throughout the United States as verified personally by this writer in an interview with the Associate Executive Secretary of the American Medical Association. A motion was passed at the annual meeting of the Society in 1953 that "All doctors under the age of sixty be placed on a twenty-four hour tour of duty in rotation". By the vote of the Society no exceptions were made to this assignment, but if unable to serve personally the member might fulfill his responsibility by furnishing a substitute.

It is felt by the committee that certain points should be clarified. It is the unanimous belief of the committee that in those instances where a patient has a doctor of his own that that doctor should make arrangements, in the case of emergency or otherwise, to send a doctor of his own or the patient's choosing and not automatically turn the call over to the Emergency Medical Service. It is likewise felt that the Emergency Medical Service is not established to make calls for doctors away on vacation, or for doctors on their days off, nights, Sundays or holidays. A survey of the calls made in the District revealed that in the Holyoke area two out of three calls were made by the doctor on duty on other doctor's patients. In the Springfield area one out of three were so made. There has been an apparent misunderstanding of the purpose of the service on the part of many doctors. The answering bureau has been advised to tactfully turn these calls back to the patient's doctor.

Some specialists believe they are not adequately equipped to handle the emergencies that they might encounter. However, they are in a better position to screen calls and obtain necessary assistance than is a lay person, such as an answering bureau or Telephone Company supervisor.

Since the inauguration of the present Emergency Medical Service program there has been a steady decrease in the number of calls. This has been due to several factors. Newspaper articles have educated the public to call their own doctor in case of emergency; our competent answering bureau in certain instances has advised the caller to take the patient directly to the Emergency Ward of one of the hospitals; Police escorts in the Springfield area between 8:00 P. M. and 8:00 A. M. have almost entirely eliminated the drunk calling for a "shot"; all of these have been causes for the diminishing number of calls. There has not been a single public complaint since the program was started. The co-operation and fine spirit of the doctors in handling an admittedly difficult task has been grati-

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DEDICATION OF THE SPRINGFIELD MUNICIPAL HOSPITAL

Dr. Edward McCormick, President of the A. M. A. will be the principal speaker at the dedication of the Springfield Municipal Hospital at 3:30 in the afternoon on Thursday, May 20th. The trustees of the hospital invite all the physicians of the Hampden District to attend the ceremony.

A local committee is planning a luncheon in honor of Dr. McCormick. All fellows of the district are not only invited but urged to attend. Tickets will be available.

This is the second time within two years that the president of the Medical Association has visited us. Last year Dr. Louis Bauer, one time interne at the Mercy Hospital did us the honor. Please make an effort to do honor in turn to Dr. McCormick.

FOR THE NIMROD!

For not a few of the others, Lawrence Lariar has just brought out 'Porgie and Bass, Fish And Be Damned, or The Night Crawler's Companion'. In contrast to the above the subject is made clear with the author's own graphic pen as in the contrasting sketches of the coddled mother cod freshly delivered of a million or more progeny and the uniparous human mother all done in with one. According to the flap, it includes everything from Albacore to Zwordfish. The author when not drawing or writing books admits spending his time at a State Fish Hatchery with rod and reel waiting for the keepers to look the other way. Prentiss Hall, Inc., N. Y. 1953 - 128 pages.

* * * *

Can't, is the twin-sister of hypocracy.

NATIONAL MEDICAL VETERANS' SOCIETY

Hampden District Chapter

On Dec. 10, 1953 the Hampden District Chapter held the first meeting, after Philip B. Keitlen, 95 State Street, Springfield was elected secretary. All medical veterans are urged to sign applications in duplicate and return to him as soon as convenient. The National Society is doing good work for medical veterans and the profession in general so join up and give them your support.

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGISTS MEET IN BOSTON, APRIL 24TH.

The Massachusetts Association of Medical Technologists will hold the annual meeting April 24, at Hotel Somerset, Boston. In addition to the business meeting the following scientific program is planned. Dr. John Conlin, of the Massachusetts Medical Association will speak on the Future of Medical Technology in Massachusetts, Dr. Wendell Caraway of the Rhode Island Hospital will speak on Protein Bound Iodine and Dr. Arnold Lear from the Thorndike Memorial Laboratory will speak on Current Concepts Concerning the Anemias. All workers in the field are welcome.

Friendship

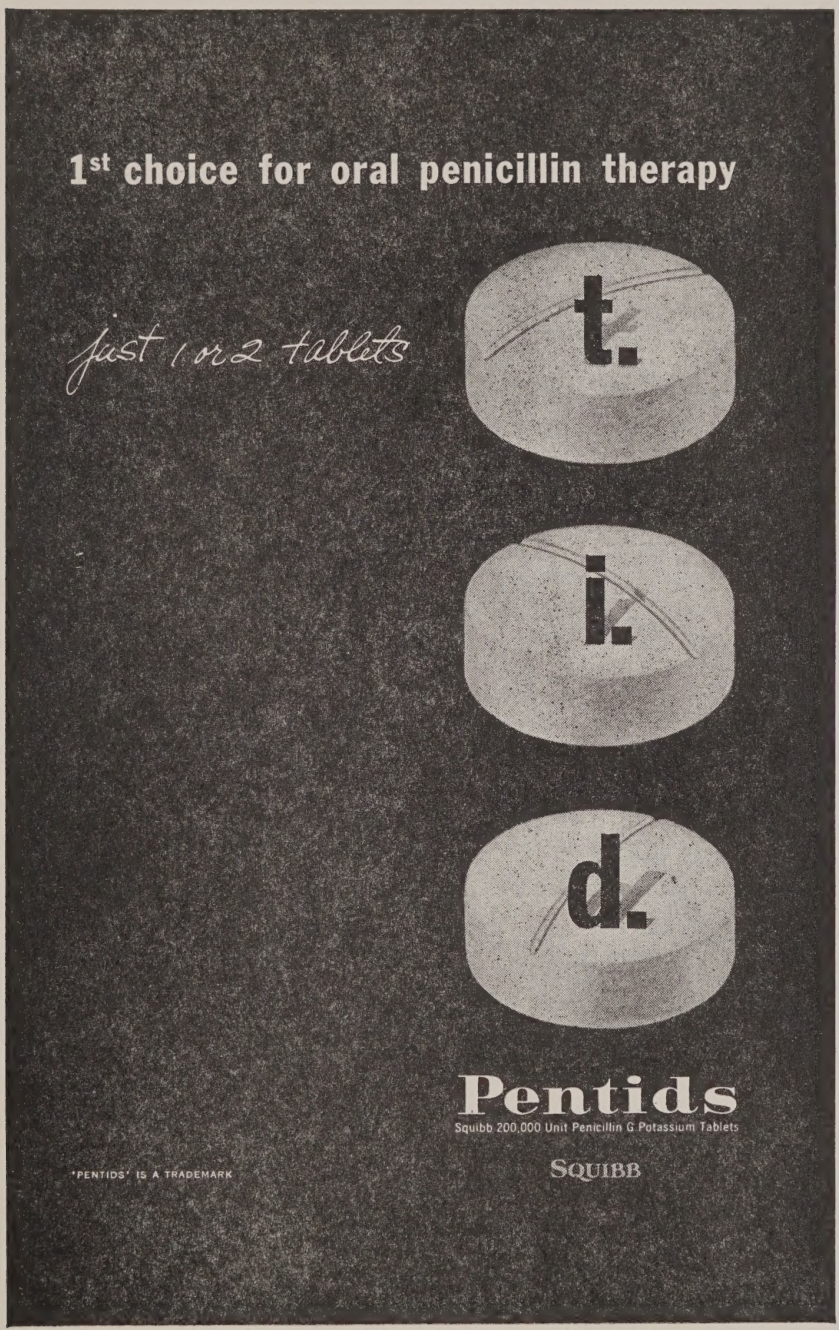
Take heed of thy friends. A faithful friend is a strong defense: and he that hath such a one hath found a treasure.

* * * *

A more glorious victory cannot be gained over another than this: that when the injury began on his part, the kindness should begin on ours.

* * * *

Mingle a little folly with your wisdom.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fying. The people of Hampden District have been getting good medical care which is the sole purpose of the Emergency Medical Service's existence.

I wish to personally thank all those doctors for their patience and tolerance. The committee welcomes constructive criticism and if problems arise they have been alert to find a satisfactory solution.

T. R. Miner, Chairman

MEDICAL READER

The new Fannie Farmer Cook Book in its providentially washable covers should be requisitioned by every male beyond middle age who has a great yen for cookery. This is the advice of one who has and did so after trying for three days to reduce a well-corned hunk of beef to edibility. Fannie herself took too much for granted for beginners, but her niece Wilma has filled in the gaps and brought the useful tome up to date, with nifty illustrations to boot. New brides also would find help there to hold the males under fifty after the novelty wears off. No, $3.95 is not too much to pay the Little Brown Co. for 878 pages of inside information on choosing pots and pans or wangling from them with F. F.'s proven magic Eggs Fooyung, a Rum Tum Tiddy or Vichisoisse that isn't vicious.

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